

STATINTL

CIA Backs Dodd in Part On West German Trip

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The Central Intelligence Agency has quietly interceded in the Senate Ethics Committee investigation of Sen. Thomas J. Dodd by attempting to substantiate a major point in Dodd's account of a controversial 1964 trip to West Germany.

Dodd has testified that he made the trip to investigate a Soviet terror and espionage operation.

The intelligence agency's support of Dodd came in a letter from CIA Director Richard Helms to Sen. John C. Stennis, D-Miss., chairman of the Ethics Committee.

Dodd, Stennis and the CIA have all declined to disclose the contents of the letter, but it was learned that Helms offered a carefully worded defense of Dodd, one of the CIA's most ardent advocates in the Senate.

In the letter, Helms said the CIA was aware of Dodd's mission and viewed the trip as one helpful to the future success of the U.S. intelligence effort.

But Helms stopped short of completely endorsing Dodd's explanation of the trip, which the senator offered earlier this month in testimony before the Ethics Committee.

The Helms letter did not say Dodd's trip was necessary, nor did it say the senator produced any vital information for the CIA as the result of his investigation.

Has Backed CIA

The CIA usually is reticent because the CIA is reticent or stepping into the middle of a congressional controversy.

Dodd has frequently spoken up in behalf of the CIA when other members of Congress have challenged the agency's competence.

Helms' letter has not yet been released to the public, but it was written with the understanding that it eventually would be

included in the Ethics Committee's hearing record.

Presumably because of this, Helms was constrained in his remarks. It was understood, however, that he has offered to meet with Stennis in private to expand on the points made in his letter.

The CIA director's letter appeared to be principally an effort to verify Dodd's argument that he made the April 1964 trip to West Germany to investigate a Soviet terror-and-espionage operation.

Dodd testified that he made the trip specifically to check on the case of Bogdan Stashynsky, a Soviet citizen who defected to West Berlin in 1961.

Stashynsky was convicted by a West German court in 1962 on two counts of aiding and abetting a murder. Dodd testified that he questioned both Stashynsky and the judge who presided over the trial.

According to Dodd, Stashynsky was a member of a Soviet terror ring that provided him with an unusual cyanide gas gun that instantly killed an intended victim, but left no trace and made death appear to come from natural causes.

Says Trip Official

Dodd testified that the trip was an official one, as part of his duties as vice chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Internal Security subcommittee.

In a 1965 subcommittee report on the case, Dodd said the investigation showed that "the Soviets employ murder as an instrument of international policy and that, despite the so-called 'liberalization' which is supposed to have taken place since Stalin's death, the international murder apparatus of the Soviet government continues to operate full blast."

Ethics Committee members questioned Dodd over the necessity of the trip when it was pointed out that his only contri-

bution to the Internal Security subcommittee report was a 2½-page introduction and that all the remaining material contained in the report had been available in Dodd's office files for several years.

Virtually all of the printed report on Stashynsky consisted of reprinting West German court decisions and none of it showed the results of Dodd's interviews, Ethics Committee members said.

The CIA was mentioned briefly only twice during the five days of public hearings before the Ethics Committee. The first reference came in a memo to Dodd from Charles J. Kersten, a Milwaukee attorney, former congressman and associate of Dodd.

Kersten, who was involved in the Stashynsky prosecution, wrote Dodd shortly before the trial began:

"Anything you might do through CIA, Tom, to aid in the publicizing of this trial will be much appreciated. The objective is to disclose that the Kremlin operates very much like Murder, Inc."

The second reference came during the committee's questioning of David Martin, an aide to Dodd who accompanied the senator on the trip.

Martin said he and Dodd "had substantial contact" with the CIA, both before and after the trip. He added:

"One or two of the appointments (in West Germany) might have been arranged through the CIA, but I have no way of confirming this . . . We did solicit their cooperation and think they were given a draft of this (subcommittee report) in advance of publication."

Considered Crucial

Substantiation of Dodd's testimony regarding the Stashynsky investigation could be crucial to his defense in the first of the misconduct allegations against him being probed by the Ethics Committee.

Dodd's former employee testified that the Stashynsky investigation was only a cover for the senator's real purpose in making the trip—to aid Chicago public relations man Julius Klein in retaining several thou-

sand dollars worth of accounts in West Germany.

But Dodd testified that aid to Klein, a registered foreign agent for West German interests, was only a secondary interest during the trip.

Dodd said he spoke with only one West German official on Klein's behalf, but Martin said that the senator spent less than seven hours of a six-day trip in actively investigating the Stashynsky case.

The Ethics Committee is not expected to reach any decision on the matter until it concludes additional hearings on allegations that Dodd misused campaign funds.